

Abstract

The object of this thesis is *Voluntary tools for the protection of the environment*. Voluntary environmental tools, also known as voluntary instruments or approaches, are a set of activities primarily used by business entities to reduce their negative impact on the environment. Their hallmarks are voluntary, ie. Private entity make voluntary decision if voluntary instrument applies or not, and their use is not mandatory in any legislative provisions stipulated, and prevention, ie. applied mainly as a preventive tools used to eliminate the negative effects of business activities on the environment.

Voluntary tools are one of the tools of environmental policy. Despite their disparate developments, we can say that their use has expanded since the 90 of the 20 century. in connection with a new environmental strategy that seeks to prevent negative impacts on the environment by trying to cause these effects to actively seek out and eliminate (prevention strategies).

In the first part I have dealt with historical and institutional development of voluntary instruments as a whole. Watching the development in the context of international, European and national developments.

In the second part, I defined a voluntary instrument, and then classified them into two main groups according to the independence of their use of voluntary instruments requiring external assistance and those who do not require external assistance. These tools are used primarily by business subjects. In order to benefit from voluntary organizations requiring external assistance instruments, it must fulfill certain requirements or conditions that are associated with their use. Control of these conditions usually supervises the state. These include environmental management systems (EMAS, ISO 14001), environmental labeling products (eco-labeling, EPD) and voluntary agreements. In contrast, the use of voluntary instruments, not requiring external assistance is provided at the company. Here, I dealt with using LCA, cleaner production, eco-design, self-declared environmental claims, environmental management accounting, environmental benchmarking and unilateral commitments (such as Responsible Care). Finally, I mentioned a specific group of green purchasing and green procurement, which relate to public administration.

In the third part I focused on a single voluntary instrument, and that is a voluntary environmental agreement. Voluntary agreements represent a contractual obligations between public authorities (at different hierarchical levels) and private actors (companies, associations or entire industries), which replace the missing legislation or go beyond the obligations contained therein. I dealt with voluntary agreements in the context of their use in the world in the EU and CR.